



# Old Testament Survey

Part Four: Job through Song of Solomon

The Wisdom Literature

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

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- Old Testament Outlines by Ethan Longhenry, [disciple\\_of\\_jesus@hotmail.com](mailto:disciple_of_jesus@hotmail.com)
- Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary
- Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament
- Gill's Exposition of the Bible
- Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible
- Matthew Henry's Commentary
- Wayne Jackson, The Book Of Job, Quality Publications
- Warren Wiersbe
- Mark Copeland, Executable Outlines
- Overviews of the Bible by Keith Sharp

(Questions were written by the compiler specifically for this class.)

# The Book of Job

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB

The Book of Job has often been praised as a masterpiece of literature.

“Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job” (Victor Hugo).

“...the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature” (Alfred, Lord Tennyson).

“The Book of Job taken as a mere work of literary genius, is one of the most wonderful productions of any age or of any language” (Daniel Webster).

For the purposes of this study, comments by James and Paul serve best: “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4). “My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” (James 5:10-11).

Job is the first of five books commonly referred to as “Wisdom Literature” or “The Books of Poetry.” These include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are called this because they are written in poetic style in contrast to the narrative style of most other books. Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) offered this concise summary of the five books:

- Job - How to suffer
- Psalms - How to pray
- Proverbs - How to act
- Ecclesiastes - How to enjoy
- Song of Solomon - How to love

## I. JOB: AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Who wrote the book, and when? No one is certain. Jewish tradition attributes the book to Moses, and other authors have been suggested (Job, Elihu, Solomon, Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe). There are references to Job in Ezekiel 14:14, 20 and James 5:10-11. “All that can be said with certainty is that the author was a loyal Hebrew who was not strictly bound by the popular creed that assumed suffering was always the direct result of sin” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown). Because the author is believed to be unknown, the date of authorship has been debated among scholars. Some think it was written before Moses (pre 1500 B.C.). Others put it at the time of Solomon (ca. 900 B.C.), and some as late as the Babylonian Exile or later (post 600 B.C.). Job himself generally believed to have lived in Patriarchal period (ca. 2000 B.C.).

For the purpose of this class, we will apply Occam's Razor (the principle of least hypothesis) and advocate the central character Job as the author and the date of writing as 2000 B.C., as it appears the scriptures purport it to be. This will make Job the oldest book in the Bible in terms of the date of its writing.

The uncertainty of author and date does not nullify its inspiration, for it is affirmed in the New Testament. Paul quotes from it on several occasions in his writings (1Cor. 3:19 from Job 5:13; Rom. 11:35 from Job 41:11). For the Christian who accepts the inspiration of the New Testament, this evidence is sufficient.

The style of the opening and close of the book certainly conform to other Biblical narratives that are historical (Job 1:1 with 1Sam. 1:1 and Luke 1:5). In Ezekiel 14:14,

Job is mentioned along with Noah and Daniel, two other figures from history. James, the Lord's brother, refers to Job as an example of perseverance (James 5:11).

The historical events appear to be set in the Patriarchal Era, between Noah and Moses. There are no references to the Law of Moses in the book, but there is a mention of a flood (22:16). Job functions as a priest in offering sacrifices for his family (1:5), similar to what we find with Abraham (Gen. 12:7). His longevity is typical of the patriarchs (Job 42:16; Gen. 11:22-26, 32). This would make Job contemporary with Abraham (ca. 2000 B.C.).

## II. JOB: THE PURPOSE OF WRITING

- To tell the story of Job
- To explore the various explanations given for human suffering
- To demonstrate the glory and majesty of God contrasted with the insignificance and dependency of man

## III. JOB: IMPORTANT LESSONS

(Wayne Jackson, The Book Of Job, Quality Pub.)

The book defends the absolute glory and perfection of God. It sets forth the theme echoed in Psalm 18:3 ("I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised"). God deserves our praise simply on the basis of who He is, apart from the blessings He bestows. Satan denied this (1:9-11), but Job proved him wrong (1:20-22; 2:10).

The question of suffering is addressed. Why do we suffer? Who or what causes it? Why doesn't God do something? Not all questions are answered, but some important points are made:

- Man is unable to subject the painful experiences of human existence to a meaningful analysis. God's workings are beyond man's ability to fathom. Man simply cannot tie all the loose ends of the Lord's purposes together. We must learn to trust in God no matter the circumstances.
- Suffering is not always the result of personal sin. The erroneous conclusion drawn by Job's friends is that suffering is always a consequence of sin. Job proves this is not the case.
- Suffering may be allowed as a compliment to one's spirituality. God allowed Job to suffer to prove to Satan what kind of man he really was. God had confidence in Job.

The book paints a beautiful picture of patience. The Greek word is *hupomone* which describes the trait of one who is able to abide under the weight of trials. From the patience of Job, we learn that it means to maintain fidelity to God, even under great trials where we do not understand what is happening.

The book also prepares the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. His coming is anticipated in several ways. Job longs for a mediator between him and God (9:33, 33:23), and Jesus is one (1Tim. 2:5). Job confessed his faith in a Redeemer who would one day come (19:25); Christ is that Redeemer (Eph. 1:7).

## IV. JOB: BRIEF OUTLINE (Warren Wiersbe)

### I. Job's Distress (1-3)

- A. His prosperity (1:1-5)
- B. His adversity (1:6 - 2:13)
- C. His perplexity (3)

### II. Job's Defense (4-37)

- A. The first round (4-14)

1. Eliphaz (4-5) - Job's reply (6-7)
2. Bildad (8) - Job's reply (9-10)
3. Zophar (11) - Job's reply (12-14)
- B. The second round (15-21)
  1. Eliphaz (15) - Job's reply (16-17)
  2. Bildad (18) - Job's reply (19)
  3. Zophar (20) - Job's reply (21)
- C. The third round (22-37)
  1. Eliphaz (22) - Job's reply (23-24)
  2. Bildad (25) - Job's reply (26-31)
- D. Young Elihu speaks (32-37)
  1. Contradicting Job's friends (32)
  2. Contradicting Job himself (33)
  3. Proclaiming God's justice, goodness, and majesty (34-37)
- III. Job's Deliverance (38-42)
  - A. God humbles Job (38:1 - 42:6)
    1. Through questions too great to answer (38:1 - 41:34)
    2. Job acknowledges his inability to understand (42:1-6)
  - B. God honors Job (42:7-17)
    1. God rebukes his critics (42:7-10)
    2. God restores his wealth (42:11-17)

## V. JOB: THE ACCOUNT

- A. Main Sections
  1. Setting the Scene (Job 1-2)
  2. Discussion between Job and his councilors (Job 3-37)
  3. God's response, conclusion (Job 38-42)
- B. Job, God, Satan (Job 1-2)
  1. Job in Uz; wealthy and very pious; demonstration of piety (Job 1:1-5)
  2. Sons of God before God; Satan in midst; God asks Satan if he has considered Job; Satan believes Job serves God because of God's blessings; God allows Satan to cause great loss for Job (Job 1:6-12)
  3. The calamitous day: servants in waves come and inform Job of his loss of servants, oxen, sheep, camels, and children (Job 1:13-19)
  4. Job mourns, does not blame God; recognizes God has given, God has taken away, God's name is to be blessed always (Job 1:20-21)
  5. Sons of God again before God; Satan present; God speaks again of Job; Satan believes he serves God because he has his health; Satan allowed to strike Job but not to kill him (Job 2:1-6)
  6. Job afflicted with sores all over his body; wife encourages him to curse God; he refuses (Job 2:7-10)
  7. Job's councilors Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar come to see him to comfort him; when they see him, do not recognize him; mourning and lamentation; no one speaks for seven days and nights (Job 2:11-13)
- C. Discussions, Round 1 (Job 3-11)
  1. Job's first speech: curses birth, would rather have died at birth, misery of those in suffering (Job 3)
  2. Eliphaz's first speech: Job once encouraging, now despondent because of circumstance; the innocent and upright do not suffer; the sinful do; voice, believed of God, came to him, declares man's

sinfulness before God; fools and folly; Eliphaz encourages Job to seek God, for God is Almighty and can deliver him (Job 4-5)

3. Job's second speech: Greatness of suffering; wish that God would completely crush him; the "value" of his friends; seeks to learn his sin, declares that he has not sinned; misery of his life; life short, miserable; wants to know why he is not forgiven, wretched (Job 6-7)
4. Bildad's first speech: God consistent and faithful; problems due to sin; if Job, children did not sin, they would not suffer; Job just needs to repent, recognize the wisdom of the ages, remember God (Job 8)
5. Job's third speech: Greatness of God, inability of man to stand before God; Job knows he is in right, but cannot answer God, would be proven perverse; disaster overtakes righteous and wicked; no arbiter between God and Job; seeks to plead to God to understand why he is suffering since he has not sinned; speaks strongly to God, recognizing His great power; wants to know why he was even born (Job 9-10)
6. Zophar's first speech: Job as foolish; if God spoke, true wisdom would come, and Job would see that he deserves worse; inability for man to understand God and His ways; repent of sin to be healed; way of wicked fails (Job 11)

#### D. Discussions, Round 2 (Job 12-21)

1. Job's fourth speech: Recognizes all these things, is wise himself; innocent suffer and the wicked are secure; all creation knows the sovereignty of God; God's great power; Job seeks to speak to God, argue his case; why do friends speak as if they are the voice of God; will God not expose them?; Job hopes in God, even if he is destroyed; wants to know what he has done to deserve his suffering, wants to know why he has been separated from God; man's life short, death comes to all at appointed time; no hope once dead; endurance of God, decay of creation (Job 12-14)
2. Eliphaz's second speech: Job does not fear God; sinning with mouth; why should Job speak thus since he is no wiser than his friends; the wicked suffer greatly and are paid back for wickedness (Job 15)
3. Job's fifth speech: Miserable comforters; he could speak as they do if he were they and they were he; God has broken and humiliated him; seeks to argue with God; Job's miserable condition in the sight of all; where is his hope since all he seeks is death? (Job 16-17)
4. Bildad's second speech: the wicked suffer greatly and justly (Job 18)
5. Job's sixth speech: Frustrated that "friends" still condemn him; Job torn down, call for justice unheeded; God fights against Job, isolates him; why do friends go after him; God is his Redeemer, and he will see Him (Job 19)
6. Zophar's second speech: Pleasure of wicked is short; their suffering will be great (Job 20)
7. Job's seventh speech: The wicked, in fact, prosper; death comes to both prosperous and poor; his friends speak falsehood since wicked do prosper (Job 21)

#### E. Discussions, Round 3 (Job 22-28)

1. Eliphaz's third speech: Job's evil abundant, provides generic examples of sinfulness; supposes that Job says that God does not see events on earth; Job like the wicked; Job must reconcile with God, and God will do him well (Job 22)

2. Job's eighth speech: I would argue my case; Job cannot find God; He is Sovereign and will do as He wills; the wicked do not pay for their wickedness, despite what friends are saying (Job 23-24)
3. Bildad's third speech: Man cannot stand before God in purity (Job 25)
4. Job's ninth speech: Sarcasm toward friends, everything exposed before God, everything trembles before Him; Job maintains his integrity; seeks for his enemies to be as the wicked; terrible things the wicked receive from God; inventiveness of man, his ability to manipulate environment, but wisdom cannot be ascertained in those ways; only God knows the way of wisdom (Job 26-28)

#### F. Job and Elihu (Job 29-37)

1. Job, continued: Desire to be like days of old, when God was with him and he was mighty, pious, and wealthy; today he is derided, mocked, a byword; he himself is miserable, beset by God with all sorts of difficulty; he mourns (Job 29-30)
2. Job, continued: Covenant with eyes; Job wants to know what he has done wrong so as to have better understanding of situation; ends speaking (Job 31)
3. Three men no longer answer since he is righteous in own sight; Elihu present, burns with anger over Job's self-justification, no answer given (Job 32:1-5)
4. Elihu's speech: Being younger, did not speak yet; since none answer, he will answer (Job 32:6-22)
5. Elihu to Job: Listen to me; I have heard your justifications; God is greater than man; He speaks in dreams; man can be miserable and yet renewed; God has all kinds of power; Job has spoken wrongly; God does what is right; respect to whom respect is due; God sees all and can accomplish justice; Job in rebellion against God (Job 33-34)
6. Elihu continues: Wickedness Job's own concern, not God's; why should God answer Job when he speaks this way; God is mighty; God makes known what is right, wrong; wicked will get their due; man must glorify God, His work; what man can understand His ways (Job 35-36)
7. Elihu continues: God's greatness as expressed in the creation, its inner workings; thus God is beyond men, men to fear Him (Job 37)

#### G. The LORD answers (Job 38-41)

1. LORD speaks to Job from whirlwind; words spoken without knowledge; God to question Job (Job 38:1-3)
2. God asks Job regarding the creation and its inner workings; was he there, and does he understand it? (Job 38:4-39:30)
3. God: can a man find fault with God (Job 40:1-2)?
4. Job: Cannot answer, will not speak (Job 40:3-5)
5. God: Will Job declare Him wrong? Be so great and perform justice for everyone; capture Behemoth and Leviathan, creatures described (Job 40:6-41:34)

#### H. Conclusion (Job 42)

1. Job's confession: God is too wonderful and mighty; Job repents (Job 42:1-6)
2. God's anger against Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar for not speaking rightly; to offer sacrifice, Job will pray for them (Job 42:7-9)
3. Job's fortunes restored twofold; everyone reconciled to him; lived in peace, security, and wealth for many years (Job 42:10-17)

## VI. JOB: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Job 1:20-21
  1. Terrible misfortune besets Job. How many would blame God, ask why all these things would happen, etc.?
  2. Yet Job keeps everything in perspective: he started with nothing, he will have nothing after death; God is to be blessed
- B. Job 2:9-10
  1. Job's wife encourages him to curse God, yet he does not do so
  2. Job recognizes if we receive good, we also will receive evil at times
- C. Job 3:1 - "After this Job opened his mouth..."
  1. Job 2:10 - "In all this Job did not sin with his lips."
  2. Job 3:1 - "After this Job opened his mouth..."
  3. Job 40:4 - "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth."
  4. Job 42:6 - "Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."
  5. Job demonstrated that a man can persevere through the worst pain of the trial and come out sinless on the other side. But the same man when give space to contemplate why he had to suffer will often succumb to the temptation to challenge God presumptuously and sin with his mouth
- D. Job 31:1-2 - "Covenant with my eyes"
  1. Need for sexual purity, concern over what is seen - Matt. 5:27-29
- E. Job 38-41 - Declarations of God's majesty
- F. Job 42:1-6
  1. Job repents, recognizes that he has spoken rashly
  2. Seems to have sinned with the tongue (James 3:1-12)
- G. Job 42:8 - "My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him"
  1. Both Job and his councilors spoke presumptuously of God. What made Job acceptable to God was the fact that he repented
  2. Rom. 3:23 - "for all have sinned" applies to Job as well as Christians; what makes the difference is what one does afterward (1John 1:6-10)

## VII. CONCLUSION

- A. The Book of Job creates as many questions as it answers
- B. Job is partially vindicated
  1. No previous sin before his speeches
  2. Friends (and Near Eastern reasoning) are wrong: suffering is not always because of sin
  3. Sometimes the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer
- C. Job went too far
  1. No one is perfectly righteous
  2. No has the right to question or challenge God
- D. Why do the righteous suffer?
  1. No satisfying answer is given
  2. Trust in God, for God understands all
  3. Some things are too difficult for us

## QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF JOB

1. Name the New Testament writer who quoted Job; give references.
2. Name the New Testament writer who used Job as an example; give references.
3. Name the Old Testament prophet who used Job as an example; give references.
4. During what Dispensation did Job live? Approximately what year? How do you know?
5. With what Old Testament character was Job very likely contemporary?
6. Why is the Book of Job classified with Wisdom Literature / Books of Poetry?
7. What can be learned from a study of the Book of Job?
8. Name Job's three councilors. Name Job's young advisor.
9. What challenge does Satan offer God at the beginning of the book?
10. How does God respond to this challenge?
11. List the three things taken away from Job? How do these three things represent the primary interests of humankind?
12. What is Job's response to these losses?
13. What challenge does Job's wife present to him? How does Job respond to her?
14. Had Job sinned up to this point? What began the process that led to his need to repent? (40:4, 42:6)
15. Why did Elihu remain silent throughout all three cycles of speeches? What moved him to speak up?
16. Summarize God's answer to Job.
17. What is God's answer to Job's three councilors?
18. Explain what Job meant when he said he had made a covenant with his eyes? How would such a covenant benefit Christians today?
19. Job and his councilors attempted to judge God by their own understanding of what is right and fair. Why is this a futile exercise?
20. Does the Book of Job give a satisfactory answer to the question of why the righteous suffer? Why or why not?

# The Book of Psalms

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

The value of the Old Testament to the Christian is expressed frequently in the New Testament:

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1Cor. 10:11).

“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Tim. 3:14-17). At the time of Timothy’s childhood, the only written scriptures would have been Old Testament. The New Testament scriptures were still in verbal form. This speaks to the effectiveness of the Old Testament scriptures, especially the Wisdom Literature in teaching one how to live a moral life and do good works. Although one would clearly need the New Testament scriptures as a guide to salvation in Christ and serving Him through the Church, this does not diminish the value of the Old Testament to illustrate how godly persons of old walked righteously before God.

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms” (James 5:13). “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

“Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-47). Note also Peter’s use of them in his first gospel sermon (Acts 2:25-28, 34-35).

The Psalms are capable of serving as:

- The Christian’s hymnal to assist in praise to God
- The Christian’s prayer book to learn how to approach God in prayer
- The Christian’s book of evidences to strengthen faith in Jesus Christ
- The Christian’s training guide for living holy and righteous lives before God

The Psalms supply the Christian with:

- An opportunity to consider Old Testament poetry and wisdom
- Comfort and encouragement for self, and in counseling and comforting others
- A clearer picture of God’s character to better understand His love, mercy and deliverance of the righteous, and His wrath and judgment against the wicked
- The Christ in prophecy offering descriptions of His suffering and reign not found elsewhere in Scripture
- Examples of fulfilled prophecies

## I. CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW POETRY

Thought Rhyme -- Also known as parallelism, thought rhyme involves arranging thoughts in relation to each other. This is done without a concern as to whether certain words rhyme with each other (as found in most modern poetry). In the Psalms, there are several different kinds of thought rhyme:

- Synonymous parallelism -- The thought of first line is repeated in second line, expressed in different words for emphasis. Psalm 24:2 - “For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters” (same idea reworded)

- Antithetical parallelism -- The truth presented in one line is strengthened by a contrasting statement in the next line. Psalm 1:6 - "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish" (note the contrast)
- Synthetic parallelism -- The first and second lines bear some definite relation to each other (such as cause and effect, or proposition and conclusion). A good example is Psalm 119:11 - "Your word I have hidden in my heart, (cause) That I might not sin against You!" (effect).
- Progressive parallelism -- There are several varieties of this form, the most common being stair-like which is composed of several lines, each providing a complete element of the aggregate or composite thought. Psalm 1:1 - "Blessed is the man, Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (note the progression)
- Climactic -- Here the principal idea in the first line is repeated and expanded to complete the thought. Psalm 29:1 - "Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones (give what?) Give unto the LORD glory and strength" (the answer).
- Introverted parallelism -- The first line is closely related in thought to the fourth, and the second to the third. Psalm 91:14 - "Because he has set his love upon Me, (note line 4) therefore I will deliver him; (note line 3) I will set him on high, (note line 2) because he has known My name" (note line 1).

Lack of Poetic Rhythm -- Much modern poetry has standard measures of identifiable rhythm, as in the poem "Mary Had A Little Lamb." With the Hebrews, however, the art of poetic rhythm was of secondary consideration. Some suggest that it is not likely that the Hebrew poets had standard measures, worked out and carefully defined. Again, their focus was on thought rhyme, not word rhyme.

Use of Figurative Expression -- The Psalms are filled with figurative expressions, and as such it is important to keep certain principles of interpretation in mind.

- The figure must be accepted and dealt with as a figure of speech, not as a literal statement. (Psalm 18:31, 51:4) One must allow for figurative expressions including hyperbole in poetic writings, and to be careful and not develop doctrinal beliefs on what may be figurative expressions not intended to be taken literally.
- The figure must be interpreted in light of its meaning in the setting in which it was used. Psalm 23:4 - "the valley of the shadow of death." It is not uncommon to hear the phrase applied at funerals to the act of dying. In the setting of the psalm it refers to a treacherous place like a steep valley where deep shadows can easily cause a misstep resulting in death, where the guiding hand of a shepherd would be very helpful to sheep to avoid death. It is therefore applicable to any time one is in perilous straits and in need of God's guiding hand.

## II. BACKGROUND ON PSALMS

The Greek word is "psalmos", from the Hebrew word "zmr" meaning "to pluck"; i.e., taking hold of the strings of an instrument with the fingers. It implies that the psalms were originally composed to be accompanied by a stringed instrument. "Psalms are songs for the lyre, and therefore lyric poems in the strictest sense" (Delitzsch, Psalms, Vol. I, p. 7). David and others therefore originally wrote the Psalms to be sung to the accompaniment of the harp.

In New Testament worship, we are told to sing the psalms to the accompaniment of the heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The phrase, "making melody," comes from the Greek word "psallontes" (literally, plucking the strings of). Therefore, we are to pluck the strings of our heart as we sing the psalms (sing with emotion).

The oldest of the Psalms originate from the time of Moses (1400 B.C.). There are three psalms penned by Moses (Ex. 15:1-15; Deut. 32, 33; Psalm 90). After Moses, David (1000 B.C.) wrote many psalms, and the sacred lyric attained to its full maturity. With Solomon, the creation of psalms began to decline; this was the age of the proverb. Only twice after this did the creation of psalms revive and then only for a short period: under Jehoshaphat (875 B.C.) and Hezekiah (725 B.C.).

Psalms was written over period of about 1000 years beginning with Moses. Some of the anonymous psalms appear to have been written during the exile (586 B.C.). The current form of the Psalms was compiled in the post-exilic period (ca. 450 B.C.)

### III. AUTHORS OF THE PSALMS

- David - Commonly thought to be the author of the book of Psalms, but he actually wrote only seventy-three, less than half.
- Asaph - The music director during the reigns of David and Solomon (1Chron. 16:1-7). He wrote twelve psalms.
- The Sons of Korah - The Levites who served in the Temple (1Chron. 26:1-19). They wrote twelve psalms.
- Solomon - At least two psalms are attributed to him (Psalm 72, 127). That he wrote many more is stated in 1Kings 4:29-32.
- Moses - As indicated above, he wrote the earliest psalms; one is included in Psalms (Psalm 90).
- Heman - Contemporary with David and Asaph, and is known as the singer (1Chron. 6:33). He wrote one psalm (Psalm 88) that has been preserved.
- Ethan - A companion with Asaph and Heman in the Temple worship (1Chron. 15:19). He wrote one psalm (Psalm 89).
- Anonymous - The authorship of forty-eight of the psalms is unknown.

### IV. ARRANGEMENT OF THE PSALMS

The Psalms were originally collected into five books according to material found in them.

- Book I (Psalm 1-41)
- Book II (Psalm 42-72)
- Book III (Psalm 73-89)
- Book IV (Psalm 90-106)
- Book V (Psalm 107-150)

The Psalms are also arranged into chief groups.

- Alphabetic or Acrostic -- These psalms have lines which in Hebrew start with words whose first letters follow a certain pattern. For example, in Psalm 119 the first eight lines start with words beginning with the Hebrew letter ALEPH, the second eight lines with words beginning with BETH, etc. This may have been done to aid in the memorization of the psalm.
- Ethical -- Psalms that teach moral principles. (Psalm 15)
- Hallelujah (hallel) -- Psalms of praise, beginning and/or ending with hallelujah or praise Jehovah. (Psalm 103)
- Historical -- Psalms which review the history of God's dealings with His people. (Psalm 106)
- Imprecatory -- Psalms that invoke God to bring punishment or judgment on one's enemies. (Psalm 69)
- Messianic -- Psalms pertaining to the coming Messiah. (Psalm 2, 110)
- Penitential -- Psalms expressing sorrow for sins that have been committed. (Psalm 51)

- Songs Of Ascent (or Songs Of Degrees) -- Psalms were probably sung by pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem to observe the feasts. They are grouped together as Psalm 120-134.
- Suffering -- Psalms are cries of those suffering affliction. (Psalm 102)
- Thanksgiving -- Psalms of grateful praise to Jehovah for blessings received. (Psalm 100)

The Psalms are written in various styles

- Didactic -- Psalms of teaching and instruction (Psalm 1).
- Liturgical -- Responsive readings for use in special services (Psalm 136).
- Meditation -- The ancient Hebrews were given to meditation which spirit finds expression in many of the psalms (Psalm 119).
- Praise and Devotion -- Psalms of joyful praise (Psalm 148).
- Prayer and Petition -- Psalms sung in an attitude of prayer (Psalm 51).

## **V. THE BOOK OF PSALMS: THE ACCOUNT**

- A. Psalms of Praise - Psalms 8, 9, 23, 29, 33, 45, 47, 62, 67, 84, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 111, 112, 113, 114, 117, 125, 134, 135, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150
- B. Psalms of Thanksgiving - Psalms 18, 30, 34, 40, 52, 56, 65, 66, 75, 92, 107, 116, 118, 124, 136, 138
- C. Psalms of Lament - Psalms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 28, 31, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 94, 102, 108, 109, 120, 121, 123, 126, 130, 137, 140, 141, 142, 143
- D. Messianic Psalms - Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 69, 110
- E. Royal Psalms (regarding the king and his line, not necessarily Messianic) - Psalms 18, 20, 21, 72, 89, 101, 132
- F. Instructional Psalms - Psalms 1, 4, 11, 15, 19, 24, 26, 27, 32, 34, 37, 49, 50, 53, 73, 91, 119, 127, 128, 131, 133, 139
- G. Prophetic Psalms (mirroring the prophets) - Psalms 81, 82, 115
- H. Psalms of History - Psalms 44, 68, 78, 105, 106
- I. Imprecatory Psalms - Psalms 35, 58, 83, 129
- J. Psalms celebrating Zion - Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122
- K. Hallel Psalms - Psalms 113-118
- L. Songs of Ascent - Psalm 120-134

## **VI. PSALMS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. Psalm 2 (Acts 4:25-26; 13:33, Heb. 1:5, 5:5)
- B. Psalm 4:4 (Eph. 4:26)
- C. Psalm 8:2-6 (Matt. 21:16; Heb. 2:6-8)
- D. Psalm 14:1
- E. Psalm 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25-28, 13:35)
- F. Psalm 22 (Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19)
- G. Psalm 23
- H. Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:46)
- I. Psalm 45:6-7 (Heb. 1:8-9)
- J. Psalm 51
- K. Psalm 69:4, 9 (John 15:25, 2:17)
- L. Psalm 69:25 (Acts 1:20)

M. Psalm 82:6 (John 10:34)  
N. Psalm 110 (Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35;  
Heb. 1:13, 5:6, 7:17, 21)

### QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS

1. Name five New Testament persons who either used the psalms or commanded their use among Christians.
2. List five uses of the Book of Psalms for Christians today.
3. Who wrote the oldest psalm? Who wrote the most psalms?
4. When was the Book of Psalm compiled in its present form? Over how many years were the psalms written?
5. How many psalms did David write? How many psalms can be described as “author unknown”?
6. Who was the chief music director during the reigns of David and Solomon? Name two other psalmists who worked with him.
7. What is the original meaning of the word psalm? What does this seem to imply about the psalms of the Old Testament?
8. What are songs of ascent?
9. What are imprecatory psalms?
10. What are hallel psalms?
11. What kind of psalm is Psalm 1? Why?
12. What kind of psalm is Psalm 22? Why?
13. What kind of psalm is Psalm 51? Why?
14. What kind of psalm is Psalm 90? Why?
15. What kind of psalm is Psalm 147? Why?
16. What is the New Testament application of Psalm 8?
17. What is the New Testament application of Psalm 14?
18. What is the New Testament application of Psalm 31:5?
19. What is the New Testament application of Psalm 45:6-7?
20. What is the New Testament application of Psalm 110?

# The Book of Proverbs

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Proverbs are a relatively new way of revealing the will of God in which divine wisdom is taught by short sentences which contain their whole purpose within themselves and are not connected with one another. There have been divine laws, histories, and psalms, and now divine proverbs. Teaching by proverbs was a plain and easy way of instruction that only demanded memorization skills. A proverb, which carries both its meaning and its proof in a short sentence, is quickly understood, agreed upon, and remembered. The word for proverb, "mashal," comes from a word that means to rule or have dominion, "dominatur in concionibus" or "rules his hearing." Cervantes defined a proverb thusly: "a short sentence based on long experience" (Don Quixote)

Proverbs have had influence worldwide for thousands of years. 1Samuel 24:13 - "As the proverb of the ancients says" or (as we would commonly put it) "As the old saying goes" has a strong impact with most men in forming opinions and fixing resolves. Much of the wisdom of the ancients has been handed down to posterity by proverbs, and it is possible to judge the character of a nation by its common proverbs. Proverbs in conversation are like axioms in philosophy, maxims in law, and postulates in the mathematics, which nobody disputes, but every one tries to explain so as to have them support his position. There are corrupt proverbs which tend to harden men in sin. Satan has his proverbs, and the world has proverbs which distort God and His word.

"Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says..." (Ez. 12:22). "What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, says the Lord GOD, you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel" (Ez. 18:2).

## I. DEFINING WISDOM IN PROVERBS

"Wisdom may be defined as a realistic approach to the problems of life" (20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge). "Wisdom is insight into the underlying causes and significance or consequence of things, which insight enables one to apply to the best end the knowledge which he has" (Homer Hailey). "Wisdom is insight into any given situation that enables one to decide the best course of action available to him and his resources that will produce the most desirable result for the most people" (Paul R. Blake). Wisdom increases the likelihood of a peaceable and fulfilling life (Prov. 3:13-18), and it decreases the potential for suffering by helping one avoid harmful choices (Prov. 3:21-26).

There are two common means of gaining wisdom. Trial and error -- one can learn it by personal experience, i.e. the hard way. There are disadvantages to gaining wisdom this way. First, one can spend a lifetime learning this way and not be considered wise until the end, and second he must live with the consequences of the mistakes he made with the trial and error method. The second and obviously more desirable means of getting wisdom is by accepting counsel from others who have proven experiences and trustworthy character. One can avoid spending a lifetime making mistakes and living with them, merely by taking good advice. Proverbs is a book of wise counsel; the person who reads and applies the wisdom therein can avert a great deal of suffering and enjoy a more pleasant life under the sun.

However, wisdom is not acquired by a casual reading of the Book of Proverbs. Solomon himself said it required work (Prov. 2:1-6). James said that prayer was necessary (James 1:5-8). "There's no free lunch!" You are going to have to study.

## POETIC FORM OF THE PROVERBS

Like the Psalms, Proverbs were written in a poetic form called the couplet. The only exception to this is Proverbs 19:7 which is written in triplet form. The single parallel couplet is basic to the structure of the entire book and fundamental to the artistic type of Hebrew proverb. Even the more expanded essay form as characteristic of the earlier chapters, is made up of parallel couplet "building blocks." Some of the characteristics that will show up in Proverbs are the following:

### Antithetic Parallelism

"Wicked men are overthrown and are no more,  
but the house of the righteous stands firm. (Prov. 12:7)  
A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself,  
but the heart of fools blurts out folly. (Prov. 12:23)

### Synonymous Parallelism

A wicked man listens to evil lips;  
a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue. (Prov. 17:4)

### Completion Parallelism

Jehovah works out everything for his own ends --  
even the wicked for a day of disaster. (Prov. 16:4)

### Comparative Parallelism

The first of the comparatives is a form of couplet in which two synonymously parallel parts of the first stich stand in comparative parallelism with the climactic second stich.

As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes  
so is a sluggard to those who send him. (Prov. 10:26)  
Like a muddied spring or a polluted well  
is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked. (Prov. 25:26)  
Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow,  
an undeserved curse does not come to rest. (Prov. 26:2)

A second variation of comparative type of parallelism is the pattern "A is better than B":

Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant  
than to pretend to be somebody and have no food. (Prov. 12:9)  
Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs  
than a fool in his folly. (Prov. 17:12)

### Numerical Parallelism

Under three things the earth trembles,  
under four it cannot bear up:  
a servant who becomes king,  
a fool who is full of food,  
an unloved woman who is married,  
and a maidservant who displaces her mistress. (Prov. 30:21-23)

## II. BACKGROUND ON THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

### Authorship:

Proverbs was written by multiple authors, the most well known being King Solomon. Solomon was also the writer of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon (Canticles), a sermon and a song. Scholars believe he wrote Canticles when he was very young, Proverbs in middle age, and Ecclesiastes when he was old. In the title of his song he only calls himself Solomon, perhaps because he wrote it near his accession to the throne. In the first verse of Proverbs he calls himself the son of David, king of Israel, at the zenith of his influence. In the opening of Ecclesiastes he writes himself the son of David, king of Jerusalem, manifesting a humility that comes with the wisdom of years.

Solomon asked for wisdom when he became king; "Give me a wise and an understanding heart..." (1Kings 3:9) He not only governed himself and his kingdom with it, but by inspiration he gave the rules of wisdom to others for posterity. Yet, Solomon did not finish his life with the wisdom with which he began it. In 1Kings 11, he apostatized by following the idolatry of his many wives; "So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel..." (vs. 9). This should also teach wisdom: one should not be proud or certain of his own righteousness (1Cor. 10:12), nor should he think any less of the wisdom of Solomon simply because he did not live up to it.

The majority of the proverbs came from Solomon. Some from "the wise," Agur, and Lemuel (1Kings 4:29-34). The authorship of the book is divided as follows:

- The Proverbs of Solomon, Book One (Prov. 1-9)
- The Proverbs of Solomon, Book Two (Prov. 10:1 - 22:16)
- Sayings of "the wise" (Prov. 22:17 - 24:34)
- The Proverbs of Solomon copied by the men of Hezekiah (Prov. 25-29)
- Sayings of Agur (Prov. 30)
- Sayings of King Lemuel (Prov. 31)

Date of Writing:

Solomon lived around 950 B.C. His proverbs would have been written during his reign over Israel (Prov. 1:1). Some of Solomon's proverbs were written down by prophets in the days of King Hezekiah (ca. 700 B.C.) (Prov. 25:1). Others were written by un-named wise men; there is no way of determining the date of their work. With regard to Agur, there is no way to determine the date of writing; "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel-to Ithiel and Ucal" (Prov. 30:1). Likewise with Lemuel, it is not possible to determine the date of writing of his proverbs; "The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him" (Prov. 31:1). There is some speculation that Agur and Lemuel are pseudonyms for Solomon, but I do not subscribe to that theory. Like the Book of Psalms, the Book of Proverbs was not finally compiled until some time later, possibly post-exile.

It seems evident that the immediate audience of the book is Solomon's son; however, the inspiration, divine preservation, and widespread use among Israel indicates that God intended it for their use. And as New Testament authors and apostles frequently quoted the Proverbs, it seems clear that Christians are expected to benefit from the wisdom of this Old Testament book.

### **III. ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

- I. The Proverbs of Solomon, Book One (Prov. 1-9)
  - A. Title and Prologue (Prov. 1:1-7)
  - B. Discourses on Wisdom (Prov. 1:7 - 9:18)
- II. The Proverbs of Solomon, Book Two
  - A. Proverbial Sayings (Prov. 10:1 - 22:16)
  - B. Thirty "Sayings of the Wise" (Prov. 22:17 - 24:22)
  - C. Additional "Sayings of the Wise" (Prov. 24:23-34)
- III. Proverbs of Solomon copied by the men of Hezekiah (Prov. 25-29)
- IV. Sayings of Agur (Prov. 30)
- V. Sayings of King Lemuel (Prov. 31)
  - A. Duties of a King (Prov. 31:1-9)
  - B. Praise of the Virtuous Woman (Prov. 31:10-31)

#### IV. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS: THE ACCOUNT

##### A. Main Sections

1. Themed Discussions of Wisdom, Wise Actions (Proverbs 1-9)
2. Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (Proverbs 10:1-22:16)
3. Words of the Wise (Proverbs 22:17-24:34)
4. Hezekiah's Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (Proverbs 25-29)
5. Agur and Lemuel (Proverbs 30-31)

##### B. Seek, Maintain Wisdom (Proverbs 1-2)

1. Introduction, purpose of proverbs (Proverbs 1:1-6)
2. Fear of Lord beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom, instruction (Proverbs 1:7)
3. Heed words of father and mother; do not go out and collaborate with sinners (Proverbs 1:8-19)
4. Wisdom's cry: listen to her reproof lest she not be there for you in difficult times (Proverbs 1:20-33)
5. Great value in wise words; God as source of wisdom; wisdom leads to the good paths; delivers from the adulterous woman; make righteous (Proverbs 2)

##### C. A Father's Instructions (Proverbs 3-4)

1. Remember teachings; trust in God; fear Him; not wise in own eyes; honor the Lord, accept His discipline (Proverbs 3:1-12)
2. Blessings of finding wisdom; great value of wisdom; do the right thing (Proverbs 3:13-35)
3. Father's instruction: get wisdom and insight, follow after it; stay in the path of righteousness, great value in it; value in father's instruction, keeping from evil (Proverbs 4)

##### D. A Father's Warnings, Especially About Adultery (Proverbs 5-7)

1. Listen to father's instructions; nature of adulterous woman; need to avoid her (Proverbs 5:1-14)
2. Value of faithfulness to one's wife (Proverbs 5:15-20)
3. God sees way of all; way of the wicked is danger (Proverbs 5:21-23)
4. Get out of debt immediately (Proverbs 6:1-5)
5. Laziness leads to poverty; ant shows way of work (Proverbs 6:6-11)
6. Calamity upon the wicked; wicked things that the LORD hates (Proverbs 6:12-19)
7. Keep father's commandment, avoid the adulteress; its terrible consequences; Solomon tells story of foolish man ensnared by adulteress, the path leading to death (Proverbs 6:20-7:27)

##### E. Wisdom (Proverbs 8-9)

1. Wisdom personified, calls to people to do right (Proverbs 8:1-11)
2. Nature of wisdom, how the world operates, was created through wisdom; great value and power in wisdom (Proverbs 8:12-36)
3. Wisdom as having house, calls to people to learn from her; contrast between attempt to correct a scoffer, correct a wise man (Prov. 9:1-12)
4. Folly personified; seduces simple men to come, partake, leads to death (Proverbs 9:13-18)

##### F. Proverbs 1-9 rather thematic; most of the rest of Proverbs not as thematic

1. On the whole, Proverbs 10-31 represent the compilation of Solomon's individual Proverbs, sayings of the wise, words of Agur and Lemuel
2. Most have an "a" line and a corresponding "b" line, but no necessary connection from one couplet to the next

3. Far too many to analyze in any detail during our time together. Instead, consider some representative examples

#### G. The Wise and the Foolish

1. Proverbs contrasting the wise and the foolish; description of wise or foolish; actions of wise or foolish; consequences of wisdom/foolishness
2. Proverbs 10:1, 10:8, 10:10, 10:13-14, 10:18, 10:23, 11:12, 12:8, 12:15-16, 12:23, 13:15-16, 13:20, 14:3, 14:6-9, 14:15-18, 14:24, 14:29, 14:33, 15:2, 15:7, 15:14, 15:20-21, 16:16, 16:21-23, 17:2, 17:12, 17:18, 17:21, 17:24-5, 17:28, 18:1-2, 18:6-7, 18:17, 19:2-3, 19:11, 20:3, 20:5, 20:15, 20:29, 21:16, 21:20, 21:22, 22:1, 22:3, 23:9, 24:3-7, 24:13-14, 26:1, 26:3-12, 27:3, 27:11-12, 27:22, 28:11, 28:26, 29:3, 29:9, 29:11, 30:24-28
3. Representative examples: Proverbs 12:15, 14:29, 24:3-7, 28:26

#### H. Righteousness and Goodness, Wickedness and Evil

1. Proverbs contrasting the righteous and the wicked; description of righteous, wicked; value of good, problems with evil; evil in anger, hostility, other reactions
2. Proverbs 10:2-3, 10:6-7, 10:9, 10:11, 10:12, 10:16, 10:20-21, 10:24-25, 10:27-32, 11:3-11, 11:16-21, 11:23, 11:27-31, 12:2-3, 12:5-7, 12:10, 12:12-13, 12:20-21, 12:26, 12:28, 13:5-6, 13:9, 13:17, 13:19, 13:21-22, 13:25, 14:2, 14:5, 14:11, 14:14, 14:19, 14:22, 14:32, 14:34-35, 15:6, 15:8-9, 15:15, 15:24, 15:26-29, 16:6-8, 16:12-13, 16:17, 16:27, 16:29-31, 17:11, 17:13, 17:15, 17:19-20, 17:23, 17:26, 18:3, 18:5, 18:10, 19:1, 19:19, 19:22, 20:6-7, 20:11, 20:17, 20:20-21, 20:30, 21:3, 21:6-8, 21:12, 21:18, 21:21, 21:27, 21:29, 22:5, 22:24-25, 23:6-8, 23:17-18, 24:1-2, 24:8, 24:15-16, 24:19-20, 25:19, 25:21-22, 25:26, 25:28, 27:19, 28:1-2, 28:4-6, 28:10, 28:12-13, 28:15-18, 28:20, 28:24, 28:28, 29:2, 29:6-7, 29:10, 29:16, 29:18, 29:24, 29:27, 30:12
3. Representative examples: Proverbs 13:5-6, 21:3, 28:1

#### I. Poverty/Laziness, Wealth/Effort

1. Proverbs contrasting the poor and the wealthy, lazy and those who work; description of those who are poor, rich, who are lazy, who work; pledges; preparation
2. Proverbs 10:4-5, 10:15, 10:26, 12:11, 12:24, 12:27, 13:4, 13:7-8, 13:11, 13:18, 13:22, 14:4, 14:20, 14:23, 15:6, 15:19, 16:26, 17:8, 18:9, 18:11, 18:23, 19:4, 19:7, 19:15, 19:24, 20:4, 20:13, 21:5, 21:17, 21:25-26, 22:7, 22:13, 22:26-27, 22:29, 23:4-5, 23:19-21, 24:27, 24:30-34, 26:13-16, 27:7, 27:13, 27:18, 27:20, 27:23-27, 28:8, 28:19, 28:20, 28:22, 28:25, 30:8-9, 30:15-16, 31:6-7
3. Representative examples: Proverbs 10:4-5, 24:30-34, 30:8-9

#### J. Accepting, Rejecting Instruction, Discipline

1. Proverbs regarding obtaining, heeding instruction; contrast of those who do not accept discipline, those who do; need for discipline; value of counsel
2. Proverbs 10:17, 11:14, 12:1, 13:1, 13:10, 13:13-14, 13:18, 13:24, 14:12, 15:5, 15:10, 15:12, 15:22, 15:31-33, 16:25, 16:32, 17:10, 18:15, 19:8, 19:16, 19:18, 19:20, 19:25, 19:27, 19:29, 20:18-19, 21:11, 22:6, 22:15, 22:17-21, 23:12-14, 23:22-25, 25:2, 25:12, 27:5, 28:7, 28:9, 28:23, 29:1, 29:15, 29:17, 29:19, 29:21
3. Representative examples: Prov. 12:1, 13:24, 14:12, 16:25, 22:6, 22:15

#### K. The Mouth

1. Proverbs regarding speech: restraining or speaking, gossip, slander, false witness, hasty speech; benefits of good speech
  2. Proverbs 10:19-21, 11:13, 12:14, 12:17-19, 12:22, 13:2-3, 14:5, 14:25, 15:1, 15:4, 15:18, 15:23, 15:28, 16:24, 16:28, 17:4, 17:7, 17:9, 17:27-28, 18:4, 18:8, 18:13, 18:20-21, 19:5, 19:9, 20:14, 20:25, 21:23, 21:28, 22:10-12, 24:26, 24:28-29, 25:7-11, 25:14-16, 25:18, 25:23, 26:2, 26:17-28, 27:14, 27:17, 29:5, 29:8-9, 29:11, 29:20, 29:22, 30:10-11, 30:14, 30:17, 30:32-33
  3. Representative examples: Proverbs 14:25, 15:1, 17:28, 19:9, 29:11
- L. The LORD: Proverbs invoking the LORD
1. Proverbs 10:22, 14:26-27, 15:3, 15:8-9, 15:11, 15:17, 15:25, 15:29, 15:33, 16:1-11, 16:20, 16:33, 17:3, 18:10, 18:22, 19:3, 19:17, 19:21, 19:23, 20:12, 20:22-24, 20:27, 21:1-3, 21:30-31, 22:2, 22:4, 22:12, 22:19, 22:23, 23:17, 25:2, 25:22, 28:14, 28:25, 29:13, 29:25, 30:1-9
  2. Representative examples: Proverbs 15:33, 17:3, 19:23, 21:30-31
- M. Justice, Giving
1. Proverbs regarding the promotion, defense of justice; benefits of giving; interaction of justice and giving
  2. Proverbs 11:1, 11:24-26, 13:23, 14:21, 14:31, 16:11, 17:5, 18:5, 18:16, 18:18, 19:6, 19:17, 19:28, 20:10, 20:16, 20:23, 21:13-15, 21:26, 22:8, 22:16, 22:22-23, 22:28, 23:10-11, 24:10-12, 24:23-25, 28:3, 28:21, 28:27, 29:7, 31:8-9
  3. Representative examples: Proverbs 11:1, 19:6, 24:23-25
- N. Pride and Humility
1. Proverbs regarding the contrast between the proud and humble; fate of proud and humble
  2. Proverbs 11:2, 12:9, 15:15, 16:5, 16:18-19, 18:12, 21:4, 21:24, 22:2, 22:4, 25:6-7, 25:27, 27:1-2, 27:21, 29:23, 30:13, 30:32-33
  3. Representative examples: Proverbs 16:18-19, 29:23
- O. Women
1. Proverbs on women: the good wife/woman, the not so good wife/woman; adultery
  2. Proverbs 11:16, 11:22, 12:4, 14:1, 18:22, 19:13-14, 21:9, 21:19, 22:14, 23:26-28, 25:24, 27:8, 27:15-16, 30:18-23, 31:1-2, 31:10-31
  3. Representative examples: Proverbs 18:22, 21:9, 22:14, 31:10-31
- P. The Heart
1. Proverbs regarding the condition of the heart: what brings joy or sorrow, pain or happiness-- involves heart, mind, spirit
  2. Proverbs 12:25, 13:12, 14:10, 14:13, 14:30, 15:13, 15:30, 17:22, 18:14, 20:9, 24:17-18, 25:13, 25:20, 25:25
  3. Representative example: Proverbs 15:30
- Q. Children: Proverbs regarding the blessings and difficulties with children
1. Proverbs 17:6, 17:21, 17:25, 19:13, 19:26, 23:15-16
  2. Representative examples: Proverbs 17:6, 19:13, 23:15-16
- R. Kings: Proverbs regarding conduct of kings, conduct before a king
1. Proverbs 14:28, 16:10, 16:12-15, 19:10, 19:12, 20:2, 20:8, 20:26, 20:28, 21:1, 22:11, 22:29, 23:1-3, 24:21-22, 25:3-7, 28:15-16, 29:4, 29:12, 29:14, 29:26, 30:29-31, 31:1-5
  2. Representative examples: Proverbs 20:2, 23:1-3
- R. Other Proverbs
1. Indebtedness: Proverbs 11:15, 22:7

2. Quiet and strife: Proverbs 17:1, 17:14, 18:19
3. Friendship: Proverbs 17:17, 18:24, 27:6, 27:9-10
4. Wine: Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-35
5. A man and his neighbor: Proverbs 25:17

#### **V. PROVERBS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. Proverbs 1:1-7 (Theme)
- B. Proverbs 3:5-8
- C. Proverbs 3:11-12 (Heb. 12:5-6)
- D. Proverbs 5:15-18
- E. Proverbs 6:27-28
- F. Proverbs 25:21-22 (Rom. 12:20)
- G. Proverbs 26:11 (2Peter 2:22)
- H. Proverbs 31:10-31

#### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

1. What is a proverb?
2. Does God approve of all proverbs? Prove your answer.
3. What is wisdom?
4. Name two ways one can develop wisdom. Which is the better way? Why?
5. According to the scriptures, how can one acquire wisdom?
6. What is the poetic form of nearly all of the proverbs?
7. Name three of the writers of proverbs. Who wrote the most?
8. Does the fact that Solomon supported idolatry in his later years invalidate the wisdom he wrote in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes? Why or why not?
9. What did Solomon say was the origin of knowledge?
10. Explain how Proverbs 3:5-8 applies to believers and followers of God in all three dispensations.
11. What did Solomon say that God does to every child He loves?
12. What is the meaning of Proverbs 5:15-18? Why is pure water such an appropriate illustration for this message?
13. Is the application of Proverbs 6:27-28 limited to fidelity in marriage? Why or why not?
14. How do the Proverbs quoted by New Testament writers support New Testament commands for Christians?
15. Discuss the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31.

## The Book of Ecclesiastes

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The book of Ecclesiastes has been called one of the most melancholy books of the Bible. It has been misused by some to teach that man ceases to exist after death. However, as with all Old Testament Scripture, it was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4) and admonition (1Cor. 10:11). It is therefore profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (2Tim. 3:16-17). The book has special relevance today in our materialistic society, for it helps us to see the vanity of many earthly pursuits. It contains lessons for all, but especially for the young who have so much to lose should they make the wrong choices early in life.

In the Hebrew Bible, the book is called Qoheleth (Koheleth) which means preacher (Ecc. 1:1). The term suggests one who speaks to an assembly. The translators of the Septuagint (a Greek version of the Old Testament) called it Ekklesiastes, which also means preacher. The word is derived from ekklesia, meaning assembly.

#### Author of Ecclesiastes

Jewish and early Christian traditions attribute the book to Solomon. The author identifies himself as "the son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1). He also refers to himself as "the Preacher" (1:1-2, 12, 7:27, 12:8-10). Internal evidences point to Solomon. Note the references to:

His wisdom - Ecc. 1:16; 1Kings 3:12

His building activities - Ecc. 2:4-6; 1Kings 7:1-12

His wealth - Ecc. 2:7-9; 2Chron. 9:13-28

His activities after writing this book - Ecc. 12:9-10; 1Kings 4:30-34

#### Date of Writing

If Solomon is the author, then the date the book was written would be around 945 B.C. The time of its compilation is unknown. Some question whether certain conditions described in the book (Ecc. 3:16, 4:13-16, 5:8) existed during the reign of Solomon. But these conditions could have been noted by Solomon in neighboring countries, or in lower-level positions of his administration. Ecclesiastes' presence in Scripture has been disputed simply because the name of Jehovah is not found in it; however, it is generally accepted as inspired based on Solomonian authorship.

### II. PURPOSE FOR WRITING

"What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?" (1:3). In other words, what value or purpose is there for living? What is the meaning of life? Having been blessed with great material resources and wisdom, the Preacher was able to explore all avenues in his search. He writes to share the results of his own investigation, and to offer observations and words of counsel gleaned from his search.

There are two main messages. The first is stated in the prologue: "All is vanity" (Ecc. 1:2). This theme is repeated by the Preacher time and again:

- Prior to describing his search for meaning - 1:14
- Throughout the course of his search:
  - The vanity of pleasure - 2:1
  - The vanity of industry (labor) - 2:11,22-23; 4:4
  - The vanity of human wisdom - 2:15
  - The vanity of all life - 2:17
  - The vanity of leaving an inheritance - 2:18-21
- Throughout his words of counsel and wisdom:
  - The vanity of earthly existence - 3:19-21

- The vanity of acquiring riches over family - 4:7-8
- The vanity of political popularity - 4:16
- The vanity of many dreams and many words - 5:7
- The vanity of loving abundance - 5:10
- The vanity of wealth without the gift of God to enjoy it - 6:2
- The vanity of wandering desire - 6:9
- The vanity of foolish laughter - 7:6
- The vanity of injustice in this life - 8:14
- The vanity of the days of darkness - 11:8
- The vanity of childhood and youth - 11:10
- At the conclusion of the book - 12:8

The key word in this book is vanity. It occurs 35 times in 29 verses. It means "futility, uselessness, nothingness." But a second key phrase to be noted is "under the sun." It is found 29 times in 27 verses. It suggests that *the message of vanity is true when one looks at life purely from an earthly perspective*. Leave God and the afterlife out of the equation, and life truly is pointless.

Another message in this book is the importance of serving God throughout life. This is the message the Preacher would leave with the young (Ecc. 11:9 - 12:1), and is stated in his final words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man" (Ecc. 12:13). The author also offers goads and nails (Ecc. 12:11). These are wise sayings that will prod ones thinking, exhortations that provide stability and direction for living.

### III. THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES: THE ACCOUNT

#### A. Main Sections

1. Introduction and Prologue (1:1-3)
2. The Preacher's Search for Meaning In Life (1:4 - 2:26)
3. The Preacher's Observations from Life (3:1 - 6:12)
4. The Preacher's Counsel for Life (7:1 - 12:7)
5. Epilogue and Conclusion (12:8-14)

#### B. All is Vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11)

1. Words of Preacher (Ecclesiastes 1:1)
2. All is vanity-- theme of book (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3)
3. Perpetuation of existence, cyclical nature of life (Ecclesiastes 1:4-7)
4. Man never satisfied (Ecclesiastes 1:8)
5. Nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10)
6. Most things forgotten (Ecclesiastes 1:11)

#### C. Vanity in Various Conditions (Ecclesiastes 1:12 - 2:26)

1. Preacher seeks wisdom in toil of men, finds it all to be vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:12-15)
2. Seeking after wisdom, knowledge itself vanity; leads to further difficulty (Ecclesiastes 1:16-18)
3. Finds various forms of pleasure; laughter, building, gardening, possessions, women; all also vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)
4. Considers wisdom and folly; wisdom better than folly, but same fate befalls all; thus all is vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:12-17)
5. Considers effort: all effort expended to what end, descendants very well will ruin it; work as vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23)
6. Nothing better than for a man to find enjoyment in work and to please God (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26)

#### D. A Season for All Things (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

- E. God, Justice (Ecclesiastes 3:9-21)
1. God has given man toil, makes things beautiful in His time; eternity in man's heart; need to be joyful, do good, enjoy toil (Ecclesiastes 3:9-13)
  2. God's work endures forever, man to fear before Him (Ecc. 3:14-15)
  3. Injustice even in place of justice; God will judge; humans, animals all die; all return to dust; best for man to just enjoy work (Ecc. 3:16-21)
- F. Events Under the Sun (Ecclesiastes 4-6)
1. Sees oppression, no comfort for oppressed, power with oppressors; better to be dead or not yet born than to see such things (Ecc. 4:1-3)
  2. Work as from envy of neighbor; vanity (Ecclesiastes 4:4)
  3. Folly of fool; quietness over toil and vanity; man without relatives yet covetous (Ecclesiastes 4:5-8)
  4. Strength in numbers (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
  5. Value of accepting wisdom/advice, even as a ruler (Ecc. 4:13-16)
  6. Fear God; speak few words before Him; pay vows to God; sin not with mouth (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7)
  7. Despite corruption, always a higher power (Ecclesiastes 5:8-9)
  8. No satisfaction in money or goods (Ecclesiastes 5:10-12)
  9. Lost riches; nothing really gained from toil in the end; must find contentment in toil, God (Ecclesiastes 5:13-20)
  10. An evil: one who obtains comfortable living, yet it is enjoyed by another; one who does not find satisfaction in life worse off than a stillborn child (Ecclesiastes 6:1-6)
  11. Vanity of toil to satisfy appetite (Ecclesiastes 6:7-9)
  12. Inability for man to know much beyond the present sphere (Ecclesiastes 6:10-12)
- G. Wisdom and Folly (Ecclesiastes 7)
1. Proverbs relating to wisdom and folly (Ecclesiastes 7:1-13)
  2. God makes day of prosperity and adversity (Ecclesiastes 7:14)
  3. Value in not being overly wise or a fool (Ecclesiastes 7:15-18)
  4. Value of wisdom; no completely righteous man; do not let criticism get you down; tested by wisdom (Ecclesiastes 7:19-24)
  5. Searching for wisdom, folly; danger of adulterous woman; man seeks out schemes (Ecclesiastes 7:25-29)
- H. The King and God (Ecclesiastes 8)
1. Act wisely before a king; man does not know future (Ecc. 8:1-9)
  2. Burial of wicked; since God's judgment not speedy, man sets heart to sin; in the end, all well only with those fearing God (Ecc. 8:10-13)
  3. Righteous suffer, wicked prosper: man must just enjoy work, what is for him, since God's hand is everywhere-- man does not understand or see (Ecclesiastes 8:14-17)
- I. Death and Living (Ecclesiastes 9:1-10)
1. No matter how you live, death comes to you; dead as knowing nothing, forgotten (Ecclesiastes 9:1-6)
  2. Thus, enjoy life, small pleasures therein; enjoy wife; do what you can to the best of your ability (Ecclesiastes 9:7-10)
- J. More on Wisdom and Folly (Ecclesiastes 9:11 - 10:20)
1. Randomness of events (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)
  2. Wisdom greater than might, even if not recognized; value of wise words (Ecclesiastes 9:13-18)
  3. Proverbs on wisdom, folly (Ecclesiastes 10:1-4)

4. Evil: folly exalted, the high lowered (Ecclesiastes 10:5-7)
  5. Proverbs on effort, wisdom (Ecclesiastes 10:8-11)
  6. Proverbs on wise vs. fools, benefit to land of good rulers (Ecclesiastes 10:12-17)
  7. Proverbs on laziness, benefits of life, wisdom in not even thinking evil (Ecclesiastes 10:18-20)
- K. Youth and Age (Ecclesiastes 11:1 - 12:8)
1. Benefits of feeding others; value of work over observation (Ecclesiastes 11:1-4)
  2. Man ignorant of God's ways; do good; appreciate light, life (Ecclesiastes 11:5-7)
  3. Value of youth; rejoice in it; yet act wisely (Ecclesiastes 11:8-10)
  4. Remember Creator in days of youth, before age sets in; description of physical deterioration; ends at death (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7)
  5. All is vanity/emptiness (Ecclesiastes 12:8)
- L. Conclusion (Ecclesiastes 12:9-13)
1. Preacher as wise, teaching knowledge; writing proverbs; wrote words of truth (Ecclesiastes 12:9-10)
  2. Value of wise words (Ecclesiastes 12:11)
  3. Weariness of many books, study (Ecclesiastes 12:12)
  4. Conclusion of matter: fear God, keep His commandments; whole of man; God brings all into judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

#### **IV. ECCLESIASTES: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. Ecclesiastes 1:2
- B. Ecclesiastes 1:9
- C. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- D. Ecclesiastes 3:11
- E. Ecclesiastes 7:10
- F. Ecclesiastes 9:7-10, 11
- G. Ecclesiastes 11:9
- H. Ecclesiastes 12:1-8
- I. Ecclesiastes 12:12-14

#### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES**

1. What benefit can Christians gain from a study of the book of Ecclesiastes?
2. What does the name Ecclesiastes mean?
3. Who is the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes?
4. What are the two most important messages of Ecclesiastes?
5. What does the writer mean by "vanity"?
6. What is meant by the phrase "life under the sun"?
7. What two things constitute the whole purpose of human existence in this world?
8. Explain what is meant by "there is nothing new under the sun."

9. Explain what is meant by “to everything there is a season.”
10. In what sense can Solomon describe the time for sorrow, war, hate, dying, etc. as “beautiful in its time”? (3:11)
11. Are the “good old days” better than modern times? Why or why not?
12. Read Ecclesiastes 8:11. What is the consequence of delayed punishment?
13. Why should one work with all of his might?
14. Explain what is meant by “cast your bread on the waters, for you will find it after many days.”
15. Why should one “remember” God while young?
16. What do you think is meant by each of the following figures of speech?
  - a. “In the day when the keepers of the house tremble”
  - b. “When the grinders cease because they are few
  - c. “And those that look through the windows grow dim”
  - d. “When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low”
  - e. “When one rises up at the sound of a bird”
  - f. “And all the daughters of music are brought low”
  - g. “Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way”
  - h. “When the almond tree blossoms”
  - i. “The grasshopper is a burden, And desire fails”
  - j. “The silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well”
17. Explain what is meant by “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.” How does this harmonize with 2Timothy 2:15?
18. Did God speak of Judgment Day in the Old Testament? Prove your answer.
19. What one event happens to all, righteous and sinner alike?
20. In what sense can life under the sun be considered vanity?

## Song of Solomon

### INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON

The title in Hebrew reads Solomon's Song of Songs. The Latin name is Canticles. The construction of Song of Songs indicates that this is the greatest and highest of songs (Shir ha-Shirim). It is also known as the Song of Solomon. Its Hebrew grammatical construction denotes the superlative; that is, the title attests to the greatness of the song, similar to "the lord of lords", "the king of kings" or "holy of holies". The Song of Solomon is a wisdom song which celebrates the beauty and glory of marital love. It teaches the blessing of purity and faithfulness in the God given institution of marriage. (Gen. 2:19-25) It reveals the dignity of sexual love and reinforces that it is God ordained and not evil. The fact that humanity is created in the image of God is central to the worth and dignity of sexual love between men and women. (Gen. 1:27)

It is one of the shortest books in the Bible, consisting of only 117 verses. According to Ashkenazi Jewish tradition, it is read on the Sabbath that falls during the intermediate days of Passover. In the Sephardi community it is recited every Friday night. The placement of the book in the canon of Scripture has been questioned by some on the basis that the word Jehovah is not found in the book and the New Testament does not quote from it. In addition, it contains no references to sacrifices, the Law, or priests. The Song of Songs is not directly quoted by New Testament writers, but is alluded to on occasion. A few examples are Revelation 3:20, which quotes the Greek Septuagint version of Song 5:2; John 12:2-3, which is an allusion to Song 1:12; and John 7:38, which is a reference to the Greek Septuagint version of Song 4:15.

The Hebrew Bible describes the author of the Song of Songs as Solomon. The construction of the Hebrew could mean that the book is about or for Solomon, but Jews and Christians alike accept the rendering as by Solomon. Since Solomon is the author, then this would place the date during the time of the Divided Kingdom in the tenth century -- 950 B.C. Although some scholars have debated the time and authorship of the book on the basis of the language used, this argument does not hold strong weight to deny either the author or His time. The mention of both Tirzah and Jerusalem at one time indicates a date before King Omri (885-874 B.C.) (Song of Solomon 6:4).

The book is a Mideastern love song about King Solomon, the Shulamite woman, and her shepherd beloved. Being a Shulamite meant that she was probably from the city of Shunaem, a village near the plain of Megiddo, to the north of Jezreel. This Shulamite woman was a peasant girl whose family was responsible for the care of King Solomon's vineyard. Due to the death of her father she was responsible for the bulk of the work seeing how she was the oldest daughter. Her brothers would give her the difficult tasks to perform. All of her available time for courtship was taken up in her work. (Song 1:6)

While tending the flocks a shepherd she knew as a child came by and had pity on her condition. Their friendship developed into affection and then blossomed into love. He promised to return one day and make her his bride. He was gone a long time, causing her to dream of him often.

Solomon as king also falls in love with her, takes her to his harem, and attempt to court her to be his wife. She laments for her shepherd love until Solomon finally relents and allows her to return to her vineyards. Her shepherd love returns and marries her.

### I. BRIEF OUTLINE OF SONG OF SOLOMON

- Love's Devotion (Song 1)
- Love's Fellowship (Song 2)
- Love's Friendship (Song 3)

- Love's Beauty (Song 4)
- Love's Communion (Song 5)
- Love's Companionship (Song 6)
- Love's Completeness (Song 7)
- Love's Maturity (Song 8)
- Key Verses: Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5; 8:4 - "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires."

## II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SONG OF SOLOMON

Our world is confused about marriage. The prevalence of divorce and modern attempts to redefine marriage stand in glaring contrast to Solomon's Song. Marriage, says the biblical poet, is to be celebrated, enjoyed, and revered. This book provides some practical guidelines for strengthening our marriages:

- Give your spouse the attention he or she needs. Take the time to truly know your spouse.
- Encouragement and praise, not criticism, are vital to a successful relationship.
- Enjoy each other. Plan some getaways. Be creative, even playful, with each other. Delight in God's gift of married love.
- Do whatever is necessary to reassure your commitment to your spouse. Renew your vows; work through problems and do not consider divorce as a solution. God intends for you both to live in a deeply peaceful, secure love.

## III. SONG OF SOLOMON: THE ACCOUNT

### A. Initial Yearning, Fulfillment (Song of Solomon 1-2)

1. Introduction: song of Songs, of Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:1)
2. She: desirous of her man (Song of Solomon 1:2-4a)
3. Others: rejoice in her (Song of Solomon 1:4b-c)
4. She: description of herself; vine-keeper; wants to know where man is (Song of Solomon 1:5-7)
5. He: describes location; speaks of how she looks (Song 1:8-10)
6. Others: will make ornaments for her (Song of Solomon 1:11)
7. She: her reactions to his presence described (Song 1:12-14)
8. He: her beauty (Song of Solomon 1:15)
9. She: his beauty; their house; she as rose of Sharon (Song 1:16-2:1)
10. He: she as lily among brambles (Song of Solomon 2:2)
11. She: affection for him; description of romantic interaction; his presence, summons to another place; description of evening together (Song of Solomon 2:3-17)

### B. Further Interaction: Dream? (Song of Solomon 3)

1. She: searches for him in the night; asks watchmen; finds him; brings him to her mother's house (Song of Solomon 3:1-5)
2. She: description of him, pomp and circumstance on wedding day; either description of Solomon or man described in terms of Solomon (Song of Solomon 3:6-11)

### C. Further Yearning, Fulfillment (Song of Solomon 4-5)

1. He: description of her; description of love for her, her love; more description (Song of Solomon 4:1-16d)
2. She: invitation to enjoy love (Song of Solomon 4:16e-f)
3. He: acceptance of invitation (Song of Solomon 5:1a-d)
4. Others: encourage enjoyment (Song of Solomon 5:1e-f)

5. She: he has come; sensual description; he has departed; watchman abuse her; her call of love to him (Song of Solomon 5:2-8)
  6. Others: their great love; why does she call to them (Song 5:9)?
  7. She: praise and description of him (Song of Solomon 5:10-16)
- D. In the Garden (Song of Solomon 6-7)
1. Others: where is he (Song of Solomon 6:1)?
  2. She: in his garden (Song of Solomon 6:2-3)
  3. He: description of her, she as only child; very fair (Song 6:4-10)
  4. She: went down to orchard, found him (Song of Solomon 6:11-12)
  5. Others: seek to see her (Song of Solomon 6:13a-b)
  6. He: does not want them to see her; description of her body parts; his desire (Song of Solomon 6:13c-7:9a)
  7. She: picks up on his imagery; his possession of her; invitation to go into garden, have fulfillment (Song of Solomon 7:9b-13)
- E. Conclusion (Song of Solomon 8)
1. She: Desire that he would be her brother, able to show affection; seal of love; strength of love (Song of Solomon 8:1-7)
  2. Others: speaks of their sister, what to do on marriage day (Song 8:8-9)
  3. She: image as city; evocation of Solomon, either as beloved or as description of beloved; she as possession of beloved (Song 8:10-12)
  4. He: seeks to hear her voice in garden (Song of Solomon 8:13)
  5. She: begs him to make haste (Song of Solomon 8:14)

#### **IV. SONG OF SOLOMON: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. Song of Solomon 2:1
1. Rose of Sharon, lily of valley, often used as descriptions for Christ.
  2. Should this be?
- B. Song of Solomon 8:4
- C. Song of Solomon 8:6-7

#### **QUESTIONS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON**

1. Who is the author of this book?
2. Name the three primary characters in this book.
3. What purpose does this book serve for present day Christians?
4. Explain the instruction of the Shulamite woman: "Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases."
5. What is the meaning of the Hebrew superlative "song of songs" and "king of kings."
6. Is sexual love between a husband and wife acceptable before God? Prove your answer from the scriptures.
7. Where did the Shulamite woman come from? What was her occupation? Did she have any family?
8. To what did Solomon compare the strength of love?